



Volume 31 No. 2 October 2003

FIRE FIGHTER

THE WORLD WOULD BE A
BETTER PLACE WITHOUT
WARMONGERING AND
UNDEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED
IGNORANT MORONS WHO
STOCKPILE WEAPONS OF MASS
DESTRUCTION — BUT I'VE
GOT TO LIVE WITH HIM!



CHANGE is in the air. Right at the pinnacle of the British Government, Tony Blair's allies are dropping like flies as the revelations flow on Britain's illegal military attack on Iraq. Spin doctor Alastair Campbell is off. Who knows who is next?

Change is also in the air in the trade union movement. In contrast to previous years, at the TUC Annual Conference in Brighton earlier this month the gloves were off. Delegate after delegate laid into New Labour. A new leadership among the big battalions pulled few punches with the Government. The reception for Patricia Hewitt and Gordon Brown was tepid.

And change – or “modernisation” as the Government would call it – remains the name of the game in the public sector. That, as we know too well in the FBU, includes the Fire Service.

In the coming months, FBU members will need to get actively involved in our response to Integrated Risk Management Planning and the White Paper on the Future of the Fire Service.

Back in June, the Union kicked off its first formal response to IRMPs with its submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. We expressed extreme concern, warning that Fire Authorities had neither the information nor the competence to set locally determined response standards in place of the current system of national standards.

We warned that the public and FBU members would be put at risk. And the Union pointed out that with their new-found autonomy, Fire Authorities and Chief Fire Officers would now be responsible for any lives lost or property destroyed under locally-set fire cover. A responsibility that they may live to regret.

The Union has also been running education programmes, including a number of seminars, to try to explain to FBU reps and members what the impact of IRMPs could be in terms of working conditions and jobs – and how members can effectively

PREACH LESS LISTEN MORE,

The White Paper is badly written and badly researched. There's much in it that makes no sense. There are some sensible ideas – many borrowed from us.

challenge the Employers' cuts agenda. Key to this process is building unity with other trade unions and local communities and using this strength to put pressure on local councillors and MPs.

Over the past few weeks, the Executive Council has meanwhile been giving detailed attention to the White Paper.

It's a poor document, badly written, badly researched, just like Bain before it. There's much in it that makes no sense. And there are some sensible ideas – many of which are borrowed from us.

What's for certain is that the White Paper won't go away. It is now out for consultation and is expected to become a Parliamentary Bill during the next session of Parliament, meaning that it will become law sometime

during the 2004/2005 Parliamentary Session.

FBU national officials have met senior civil servants in John Prescott's Department to seek clarification on some of the White Paper's detail. And they have prepared written evidence



ANDREW



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to the relevant Parliamentary Select Committee that is looking at the White Paper. The closing date for written evidence was 19 September and the Union should give supplementary oral evidence sometime before Christmas.

In July, the EC decided to involve members, through Branches and Regional Committees, in a consultation exercise on the White Paper. For FBU members, at the sharp end now and at the sharp end tomorrow, must have a say on the future of the Fire Service if it is to be a future that can inspire any hope.

To help the process along, a Discussion Paper will soon be circulated and this will be supplemented by information in coming issues of the *Bulletin*, which has already given much detail on the contents of the White Paper. The consultation will take place over the next few weeks and the results will be summarised and widely circulated to Select Committee Members, Government Ministers, MPs, Fire Authority Councillors and others.

Chancellor Brown told the TUC Conference that he wanted world-class public services. It's an aim to which trade unions, including the FBU, are totally committed. He also said that disagreements between unions and the Government over public service "reform" should be resolved through dialogue and discussion.

Yet, whether manufacturing, foundation hospitals, PFI or the Fire Service, there has been precious little evidence that Mr Brown – or Mr Blair – care to listen. That's why Downing Street has fallen out with so many in the trade union movement.

As far as the Fire Service is concerned, the Government knows it must win back the trust among frontline staff if it wants far reaching change to mean real improvements to the public.

We need much less of the preaching and a bit more listening to the views of those providing what is still the best Fire Service in the world.

Andy Gilchrist

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F B U C O N F I D E N T I A L F R E E P H O N E
H E L P L I N E

Agreement heralded

AFTER extensive consultation with members, the Executive Council has accepted the new pay formula linking future salary increases to professional workers' incomes rather than those of manual workers. This represents substantial further progress in implementing the 2003 Pay Agreement of 13 June. And it vindicates our struggle for a professional wage for a professional job.

The new formula links future annual rises of Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff to pay movements gained by Associate Professional and Technical Staffs (APT) across the economy. Given the nature of the work now undertaken by FBU members this provides a more realistic, better basis for pay determination than the old pay formula, which was linked to the increasingly weak earnings of manual workers.

THE NEW FORMULA

The new system, drafted by the NJC and approved by members, will come into operation from 1 July 2005. It says "all pay rates determined by the NJC for Local Authorities' Fire Brigades shall be adjusted in line with the movements in the average pay for the APT classification (full-time, male and female) in the National Earnings Survey [NES] for April the previous year projected to the operative date of the pay increase, which will then be compared with the previous July's figure."

HOW IT WORKS

The Government's earnings statistics are based on a number of Standard Occupational Classifications and Firefighters are included in the "Associate Professional and Technical" Group (the NJC has agreed that Emergency Fire Control Staff will get the same rise). Also included in this group are a wide range of occupations in the public and private sectors, including laboratory technicians, occupational hygienists, health and safety officers, police, and prison officers, as well as business and finance associate professionals. The group's earnings range from £350 to £950 per week.

LINK TO PROFESSIONAL PAY

The new formula will link members' pay to the overall movement of pay within the classification and not to a specific group or quartile, unlike the previous formula which linked us to the upper 25% of male manual workers.

This means that if workers in the APT classification receive an overall average pay increase of 4%, fire service pay will be increased by the same amount.

A REAL VICTORY

This is a significant improvement on the previous formula. This is



CONTROL

TWO consultants appointed by the Union and Employer sides of the NJC to carry out job evaluation of Emergency Fire Control Operators have reached broad agreement on a substantial majority of issues.

Under the June 13 Pay and Conditions Agreement, the NJC was to make arrangements for an evaluation of the relative job weights of Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Operators and "if it is agreed that the existing 92% relationship should be improved, it would be backdated to 7th November 2002."

The consultants worked together to produce a joint report that was considered by the two sides of the NJC ahead of the July 31 deadline.

There remains disagreement on a small number of job evaluation factors because of differences of opinion over factual information to be taken into account. Each consultant is now gathering more information before coming to a conclusion, which the NJC has asked them to reach as soon as possible.

ds era of

largely because under the old formula any additional payments made on top of basic pay were taken into consideration for the purposes of calculating average earnings, for example: casual overtime, London weighting allowance, day crewing payments and other local allowances. But under the new formula these payments will no longer be taken into account in determining pay increases.

ALL HAVE STAKE IN SYSTEM

Some members have expressed concern that the Fire Service Pay and Conditions Agreement 2003 makes no explicit reference to maintaining the pay formula after 2006. The EC believes, however, that all parties within the Fire Service will welcome the stability of a National Pay Formula and so fully expects that the pay formula will continue beyond that date.

RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS

Negotiations are ongoing on a new deal for Retained Firefighters.

The Union has already won agreement on the principle of pay parity. It is now for the NJC to agree a new pay structure incorporating the parity principle and covering all existing fees and allowances. The Union is seeking significant improvements in turn out fees, in the retaining fee and pressing for all fees and allowances be applied to all roles.

The Fire Service Pay and Conditions Agreement 2003 stated a new Retained pay structure would be implemented by 7 November 2003 with any further improvements being additional to the overall increase of 16% by July 2004.



Professionals: Firefighters remove chemical protection suits after finishing an exercise in September simulating a chemical agent terrorist attack in London

TUC Conference in Brighton this year was marked by sharp attacks on the Government over PFI and trade union rights, as well as Iraq, manufacturing and top-up university fees. The Fire Service dispute and the subsequent White Paper, also gained a high profile, with

delegates recognising them as examples of the Government damaging "reforms" to public services and its scandalous disregard for trade union rights.



Congress in session

Service raises

CONGRESS passed overwhelmingly two FBU motions, one relating to the Fire Service and another on Disarmament, while the Union also succeeded in gaining backing for an important amendment about the Fire Services Bill to be added to the trade union rights motion. As usual, there was a strong participation of FBU delegates on a number of other debates, domestic and international.

Proposing Motion 55 on the Fire Service, General Secretary **Andy Gilchrist** told conference that FBU members had been treated disgracefully during the dispute by the media and Government. Yet, he said, they were proud to be "working in still the finest Fire Service in the world". But he warned: "If that White Paper is the basis of legislation for the future of Fire Service, well I have to say, we are in for some seriously dangerous times."

Andy said it would be a Fire Service that "might be a bit cheaper, there might be fewer Firefighters, it might have less effective 24 hour coverage, but it won't be able to match the high standards that Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff currently perform to."

Andy reminded Conference that the current Fire Service

achieves 96% of its targets and that the Audit Commission has recognised the Service as a top public performer with high standards of

service delivery even while, over the last 20 years, the workload has doubled and the workforce has been reduced. He told conference that in addition to road accidents, chemical and nuclear spillage incidents etc, FBU members are being asked to take on the lead responsibility for rescuing people after a terrorist attack.

"Our members are happy to take those additional responsibilities," said Andy. "But we're just a bit damned tired of politicians accusing us of engaging in so-called Spanish practices, of refusing, allegedly, to accept change and modernisation."

"My members work and provide a can-do service," he told conference. "But we cannot accept excessive overtime, less fire cover for your communities, and we can't accept the closure of emergency fire control rooms who have decades of knowledge. But that's what modernisation New Labour-style seems to mean: fewer Firefighters and a greater danger."



Andy Gilchrist: risk of dangerous times ahead

"These proposals set out in the White Paper frankly are an irresponsible leap in the dark. They will end national fire standards of fire cover. In future if these reforms go through all of our towns and cities will have their own standards – Fire cover by postcode. Where you live will vitally influence your chances of being rescued in a serious fire and the same can be said of the workplace. People working nightshifts – I'd have a look at your life insurance cover in the future."

He also slammed the Fire Services Act for effectively ending free collective bargaining in the Fire Service for the next two years, warning that if the current proposals for the Fire Service became law, "then the very cornerstone of the ILO Conventions will be breached."

Andy told the Conference that the FBU has argued for a new approach that includes a de-centralised risk-based service, but he called it "irresponsible and dangerous" to end national standards. "Why couldn't we have had piloted tests and assess the costs? What we've actually got from the Government is reform on the cheap and change based on prejudice not evidence."

"There's an awful lot of work to do for us in the next few months to save this Labour Government from itself," he added.

Andy called on trade unions and trades councils to join with the FBU to "ensure that you're not short-changed on fire cover." He concluded: "Yes we need more teachers, more nurses, more doctors. But we certainly also need more Firefighters, not less, if we are to protect people properly in the 21st Century."

Karie Murphy, a delegate from Unison, seconding the Fire Services motion, slammed the "interference and manipulation of the Government" during the Fire Service pay dispute.

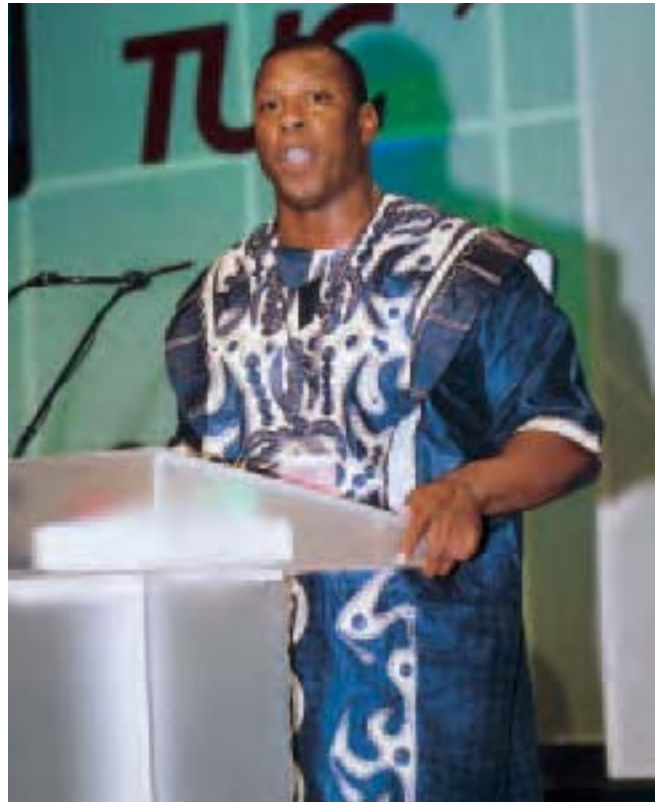
She also drew the parallels between the struggles of FBU and Unison members. "As public sector workers, Unison has a lot in common with the FBU: action taken in defence of services, opposition to PFI and a refusal to comply with strategies that erode conditions of service of our members."

"I'm not an expert in the Fire Service, I'm a nurse in the health service, but I have every faith in the integrity of the comrades in the FBU," Karie added. "If they don't trust Bain and the Fire Service Bill, we don't trust them either."

"Nurses, social workers, ambulance workers and Firefighters have modernised. Enormous change has been implemented. It's manipulative and untrue to say we have not. And it's appalling that the Government and press have used such divisive tactics," she said, pointing to efforts by Labour politicians to turn "comrade against comrade".

"Mr Blair stated that nurses would never forgive him if he paid the Firefighters an inflated rise. Get real. Nurses, like most of us, can see right through you. Mr John Prescott, any credibility you had in this congress evaporated when you attacked the FBU. John Prescott should hang his head in shame," Karie added.

"Anti-trade union legislation continues to bind your hands but it can do nothing to diminish the fervent and burning rage that all of us feel when our people are betrayed and demoralised. Comrades from the FBU be assured, Congress recognises the



Michael Nicholas: UN sidetracked by our Labour Government

experience you had lived, the tribulations you have faced and the monumental task that you face in resisting the Fire Services Bill."

"Trade unions showed solidarity with the FBU during the strike. Now we must work collectively within the community to protect the Fire Service," she said.

DISARMAMENT

Moving Motion 86 on Disarmament, **Michael Nicholas**, B&EMM EC member warned that: "We live in dangerous times. Wars and weapons of mass destruction proliferate. The United Nations is deliberately sidetracked by the world's only superpower, and this is encouraged by OUR Labour Government, in OUR name."

While these were "deeply political questions", Michael said that "no trade union card can survive a nuclear holocaust. And it will be our members who will be in the front-line of rescue services should we not halt and reverse the current policies of Bush and Blair.

"At root many of our current problems both at home and abroad stem from our Government's failure to respect the international rule of law. For decades the principles enshrined in international law were strongly supported by all wings of the British Labour Movement. But now with no discussion, no democratic debate, most Labour ministers seem prepared to ignore the international rule of law completely. Iraq was the prime example of this recklessness."

"And at home," Michael added, "we now see John Prescott being prepared to impose settlements, to totally undermine

collective bargaining in blatant convention of ILO Conventions and the European Social Charter.”

“Far from respecting the terms of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and undertaking nuclear disarmament, the United States and Britain are attempting to impose their will on the rest of the world.”

“We have to join with others to convince the Labour Government to change course before the electorate changes the Government. Immediately this requires the British Government to argue for the United Nations to supervise the election of a new Iraqi Government, and for the oil wealth of Iraq to be controlled by the Iraqi people. It means taking unilateral measures towards nuclear disarmament under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.”

“It means being part of a UN-led process of multilateral nuclear disarmament. Above all it means saying to the British people that our Labour Government is for a new world order based on the rule of international law, of peace with security for all as the basis for disarmament. The resources so released can be used to ensure that there is clean drinking water for all with universal education and health provision. Only then will the anger of the starving and the oppressed be addressed. This is the way to tackle terrorism.”

PENSIONS

The FBU also made a major contribution to a number of other debates.

Val Salmon, EC member for Emergency Fire Control Staff, spoke in favour of Motion 68 on Pensions.

“It will come as no surprise to all out there that like everyone else our pension schemes are under attack,” she said. “If we’re ill we virtually have to provide a death certificate to leave,” she said. “Members suffering from ill-health or particular stresses are still having to work or face being sacked under capability.” Val also explained that the Firefighters’ occupational pension scheme was “by no means underfunded by our members who pay 11% contributions”.

“We will continue to expose the fact that final pension schemes are in financial difficulty because employers have spent the cash,” Val promised conference. “We will continue to defend out pension scheme and we totally support the call for national campaign including a campaign of action on all aspects of pensions. What this Government is trying to do is a total disgrace. We must take the opportunity to unite and fight this onslaught for our past, our present and our future.”



Val Salmon: pension scheme under attack

WORK - LIFE BALANCE

Supporting Composite 10 on Work-life Balance, **Jim Barbour**, EC member for Northern Ireland, said that “we in the Fire Service will not be waiting with baited breath for this government to do something positive for ordinary people.”

But Jim spoke in favour of a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, noting the FBU had campaigned for this during the recent dispute. However, “the reality is that Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff work an antediluvian 42 hour week. Our officer members, incredibly, are expected to work a 78 hour week. “And on top of this,” he said, “the Government is hell bent on excessive overtime, in order to cut jobs and they call it modernisation.”

Jim also reminded conference that “this Government is talking about work-life balance, while also telling us that we will have to work until 70 to pay for our retirement. The spin doctors will attempt to dress this up as a campaign against ageism – but I am sure you can see through that one.”

“Conference, what our rulers want is to put more work into life not life into work.

We say, a 35-hour week will create jobs, raise productivity, reduce workplace stress and will improve family life. Sounds like a good deal for all.”

OPPOSING THE BNP

Vicky Knight, EC member for the National Women’s Committee, supported composite 5 on Opposing the BNP and Racism.

Vicky slammed the “The Labour Party’s consistent pandering to the right wing press”, adding that it “undermines at every opportunity, the campaigns that the Trade Union movement has co-ordinated against the fascists, racists and breeders of hate.”

“Bullying and displacing people, then refusing them legal entry into the UK is not a recipe for good, positive race relations. The so-called ‘tough approach’ to asylum will fuel the fascists’ agenda, not stop them, and ‘reception’ centres could be an invention of the racists themselves,” Vicky said

“Warning of the rise of the BNP, she said: “We knew it was coming and we did not do enough. The full weight of the Trade Union movement and its affiliated organisations is desperately needed to redress some desperate situations in some towns and cities.”

“Members of the FBU ... are at the sharp end, when people react to immigration and racist abuses. Yar’s Wood Detention Centre set on fire, inner city riots with the inevitable petrol bombings etc. That



Jim Barbour: 35-hour week campaign

is why we welcome and support this composite," said Vicky, who also welcomed the composite's emphasis on education and campaigning work.

"We need clear rules giving every Union the power to discipline members involved in racist activity in the workplace and in the Union," Vicky added. "This is not an attack on being a member of a political party, but an attack on unacceptable and racist behaviour."

"As a democratic, voluntary organisation we should have the freedom to write our own rule books," she said. "Yet we cannot legally expel an extreme right-wing activist for breaching our Trade Union rules and policies put in place to make things better."

"Our message is this, let's step up the action. We must rid our society, and most importantly our movement, of the scourges of fascism, racism, hate and intolerance."



Vicky Knight: freedom to write own rule books

SEXUAL ORIENTATION REGULATIONS

Stewart Brown, FBU Gay & Lesbian Section Secretary, supported Composite 7 – Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003. He emphasised that the issue was about "basic human rights". And he criticised the Government for resisting the introduction of the new regulations until the very last minute and for watering them down.



Stewart Brown: basic human rights

"Statutory protection in employment for lesbian and gay people. Sounds like discrimination on these grounds will come to a halt. I have enormous doubts and I'm sure you will too. Doubts because we don't seem to be getting the message through to this Labour government. Are they really listening to us?"

He complained that the Government was listening more to "right-wing bigoted elements" within the Church than to "Lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals in this country [who] now outnumber worshippers across all faiths."

Stewart also had doubts about the exemption in the regulations for public sector pensions. "We have fought for many years in the FBU and through organisations like the TUC and Stonewall to end discrimination in public sector pension schemes. Less than a third of

THE following two FBU motions were passed unanimously at the TUC annual conference this year.

MOTION 55, FIRE SERVICE

Congress opposes government plans for the Fire Service based on the Bain Report. The Fire Service is currently a high-performing public service enjoying widespread public esteem. Government proposals, outlined in the White Paper, put all this at risk while threatening jobs and the safety of the public and of Firefighters.

Congress declares that new investment and greater levels of local democratic control are required to further modernise the Fire Service. But Congress cannot support proposals to achieve these ends within current inadequate budgets.

Congress rejects the Government's misnamed modernisation strategy, which seeks to sacrifice rights at work and job security in order to promote private sector profit maximisation via PFI and other unaccountable management techniques and operational structures.

Congress calls on all affiliates and Trades Union Councils to assist the FBU in local campaigning for a better Fire Service and to prevent Treasury-driven cuts. Congress further calls on the Government to resist unprincipled attacks on the right to strike, on negotiating rights and national agreements, and on local democracy in the Fire Service.

MOTION 86, DISARMAMENT

Congress affirms its support for the international rule of law, for the United Nations Charter and for the International Labour Organisation Conventions. Congress calls for renewed efforts to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction and calls on those with the biggest arsenals to initiate multilateral initiatives under the aegis of the United Nations to achieve substantial progress towards world disarmament.

Congress deeply regrets the failure of our Labour Government to uphold and promote the principles of the UN Charter or to fulfill its obligations as a member of the ILO. Congress calls on the General Council to pursue these crucial issues with relevant ministers and requests that affiliated unions raise these matters with MPs and political parties.

The FBU also successfully moved an amendment to Motion 13 on Trade Union Rights and partnership in the public sector:

Congress condemns the Fire Service Bill 2003 which if enacted will give ministers powers to impose terms and conditions of employment in contravention of ILO fundamental principles and conventions to which the UK is signatory. This attack on collective bargaining is a threat to workers' rights generally.

public sector pension schemes recognise unmarried partners. Yet over 90% of private sector schemes do," he said. "Ministers also late last year changed their own pension scheme to recognise unmarried partners. And this happened with Civil Servants too. I say if it's good enough for them, it's good enough for us."

"So we are told to modernise the Fire Service," he continued. "But where, Mr Prescott, is your modernisation of our scheme when it comes to fairness? Public sector pension schemes should be available to all, Mr Prescott; and Now. We must stop this discrimination."

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Val Salmon, took to the podium again in support of Composite 18 on Middle East Peace.

Val accused Tony Blair and George Bush of "jackbooting" their way into Iraq on the "mythical claim of weapons of mass destruction" and "despite national and international conventions and laws" - of having no plan for the reconstruction of Iraq. She called for the Iraqi people's right to self-determination to be respected and said that "as a first significant move, sanctions must be lifted".

Val welcomed in the composite the TUC's "best endeavours to support independent Trade Unions". But she told conference that "what we can't allow is US companies to occupy Iraq as a permanent base camp".

She also called for delegates not to forget Palestine. "Not content with building the Apartheid Wall - twice as high as the odious Berlin Wall, the Israeli government have declared open warfare on Palestinians with a shoot-to-kill policy."

"We need to make it clear to all in Iraq and Palestine that ordinary people of Britain neither support nor will sustain decimation of people. She called for the implementation of UN Resolution 194 - concerning the right to return or compensation for Palestinians displaced by Israel - which was first moved in 1948 and has been reaffirmed a staggering 135 times, but which still has not been enacted. This, she said was something "that was really needed by Iraqi Trade Unionists, Palestinians & Israelis"

CUBA

Pete Skinley, EC member for Region 9, supported Motion 83 on Cuba. He said the US government's economic blockade against Cuba and the antagonism to the country by governments in many parts of the globe was motivated by the fact that "Socialist policies threaten the wealth and privilege of many leaders of the third world."

Despite the attacks on Cuba and the fact that it remains a poor Third World country, "Cuba remains a beacon for progress. It provides for its people the best education and health service in the developing world. Its literacy and child mortality rates are better than some states in the USA," he said.

"More than half a million Cubans have carried out international missions as combatants, as teachers, as technicians or as doctors and healthcare workers. Tens of thousands have provided their services and saved millions of lives over the course of the past 40 years," said Peter pointing to Cuba's essential role in helping the UN fight AIDS in Africa.

"Cuba is constantly at threat from the United States," he continued. "Castro could end that threat tomorrow by announcing an end to socialism in Cuba and signing up to a long-term trade and aid agreement with the United States. That's one option. Another option is to continue to proclaim the right of the Cuban people to self-determination and the sovereign right with the full support of the people to build a socialist society. Surely it is this second option that a Labour Government should be supporting."



Pete Skinley: Cuba a beacon for progress



The FBU delegation



T&G General Secretary Tony Woodley addresses the FBU fringe meeting with (from the left) GMB Public Sector National Officer Mick Graham, Professor Mary Davis, NASUWT Deputy General Secretary Chris Keates and Andy Gilchrist

Until we collaborate, we

THE FBU organised a well-attended fringe meeting on Public Sector Reform. Chaired by Professor Mary Davis, Head of the Centre for Trade Union Studies at London Metropolitan University, the platform comprised Andy Gilchrist, FBU General Secretary, Tony Woodley, T&G General Secretary elect, Mick Graham, GMB Public Sector National Officer and Chris Keates, NASUWT Deputy General Secretary.

Andy opened the proceedings by slamming the Government for setting out to “do something in our view extremely detrimental and damaging to this country’s public services.” Commenting on the White Paper, Andy condemned the introduction of performance targets, “despite everything we’re told by our colleagues and comrades in education and the health service about the damage the Government’s adherence to targets has done”.

He said the FBU had no beef with proposals to give fire prevention more prominence in the future, but slammed the way Fire Authority Integrated Risk Management Plans were being introduced. “Before you’ve educated people about fire, before you’ve prevented fire, you actually cut the amount of intervention in the numbers of fire stations, fire engines and Firefighters

and that’s the real problem. That’s the bit where we say: ‘No, no we need to see the reforms in practice’. In terms of running an emergency service on behalf of a modern society, it’s an incredibly high-risk strategy,” he said.

Andy also highlighted the lessons of the fire at Yarl’s Wood detention centre for asylum seekers. He criticised the refusal of civil servants to act on Fire Service advice to install sprinklers. “Mr Prescott will have the same people involved in the new fire safety regulations for this country. And their judgements, it is clear to us from that one incident, are based on cost.”

Andy said the incident, which occurred under the management of the private company Group 4, also underlined the dangers of PFI. Group 4 failed to train people to leave the building and, on police advice, Firefighters were prevented from tackling the blaze for over an hour. “Remember,” he told the audience, “once next spring those new fire safety regulations are put into place, Group 4 will have the ability, indeed the right, to self-assess their fire safety risk plans.”

Andy warned the audience that the Government’s proposals would not only damage the “finest Fire Service in the World” but its public service reform agenda threatened all public services.



Andy Gilchrist with T&G General Secretary Tony Woodley (centre) and GMB General Secretary Kevin Curran (left)

EVERYTHING THAT IS WRONG WITH

THE recent Fire Service dispute characterised all that is wrong with the Government's approach to public sector reform.

I was angered by the way the Government tried to intervene, at crucial times when the FBU and the Employers were trying to reach a negotiated settlement to the dispute. Even more shocking was the way in which the FBU was portrayed as anti-reform and anti-modernisation – both untrue assertions. I hope that public servants will never again be made to feel that the Labour Government is pitted against them.

The dispute, yet again, highlighted the very worst aspects of the British press, revealing elements of the right wing media at its very worst, and gutter journalism at its most vicious. It is against this backdrop that the FBU is to be commended for the impressive media campaign which it ran during the dispute.

I would like to pay tribute to all FBU members who over many difficult months demonstrated such solidarity, determination, and commitment. In particular, I would like to pay a special tribute to Andy Gilchrist who provided exemplary leadership for the Union at a most crucial time.

I know that the FBU did not achieve every aspect of the campaign's just demands, but I am mindful of the fact that the Union managed to secure one of the best agreements in this year's pay round, including maintaining national bargaining and a new national pay formula – and all credit to your campaign.

On behalf of the T&G, I look forward to building on what is already a close relationship with the FBU and working towards our shared goals and aspirations.

"This trade union movement needs to wake up to the fact that until we collaborate on issues, for instance, reform of public services, in the same way that the world of capital does, the world of big business does, the world of government do, we will not succeed," Andy said.

Mick Graham, GMB Public Sector, National Officer, said: "the Government listens, but it doesn't hear," but noted that there were signs that the trade union movement was waking up. He pointed to the strikes last year in local government, which saw 700,000 on the picket lines, and which represented the "biggest strike of women workers in trade union history".

He also pointed to the Fire Service dispute. Commending the FBU for the way it conducted its pay campaign, Mick took exception to the Government's "reform" proposals. "When my house is on fire, I don't want an ambulance with a fire extinguisher on the back. I want a highly-paid, highly-skilled Firefighter to protect my family."

Mick lashed out against PFI and outsourcing public sector contracts to private companies. "We want a public service that is for the public good not for private profit," he said. "Blair," Mick

"Even opponents of the FBU's demands should have to acknowledge the honesty behind the Firefighters' concerns to make the sure the Service remained the best it could be."

David Turner, Industrial Correspondent of the Financial Times, who made this year's traditional industrial correspondent's speech to the TUC

concluded, "says history will forgive him on Iraq – well history won't forgive you if you mess up our public services."

Chris Keates, Deputy General Secretary of teaching union, NASUWT, slammed the "whole terminology" of "public sector reform" as an "implicit criticism right from the start ... If you talk about reforming something the implication is that it is all bad and you've got to actually transform it to make it good. It implies serious problems."

The media was "demoralising and demotivating people who do some of the most important work in this country," she said. "I think public sector workers must be the only people who go to work every day under a raft of criticism."

Tony Woodley, TGWU General Secretary elect, (see article, left) accused the Government of failing to "understand the value of the job public servants do" and added: "It was absolutely a disgrace the way in which the FBU and Andy were vilified, the way in which they were threatened".

He noted, however, that the FBU came out of the dispute with its head high. "The settlement that was eventually reached was the best I've seen in the public sector if not the private sector in recent times," he said.

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SAFETY UNION CAMPAIGNS AGAINST SERVICE CUTS

RECENT instructions issued by the Health and Safety Executive reveal plans to reduce the number of investigations into major injuries at work and the time spent on cases that are investigated.

While the victims of workplace accidents and their families continue to campaign for tighter laws to prosecute rogue employers, the organisation responsible for protecting the public has instructed its inspectors to "conclude investigations as early as possible."

The instructions come in the wake of a funding crisis at HSE after the government froze the executive's resources, prompting a rash of cost-cutting measures.

As more details emerge of how the cuts are affecting HSE's ability to protect the safety of UK workers, Prospect, the union which represents 1,750 inspectors, scientists and other professionals in HSE, has launched a campaign for the government to back its commitment to improving health and safety at work by properly funding the HSE.

The £260m allocated to HSE for 2003 amounts to less than 20p a week to protect each of the UK's 27 million workers. The budget allocation for the next three years equates to a 10 per cent cut in real terms.

The group hardest hit by the cuts is the Field Operations Division (FOD), which is to lose 50 of its 590 front line inspectors, reducing the number of investigations and inspections carried out by the division by 10,000 per year.

As well as the instruction to reduce the time spent on cases, plans to reduce the criteria that prompt an accident investigation are being piloted in the north-west of England before being introduced nationally.

Under the new criteria an employee could suffer a scalping, serious multiple fractures or lose the top of up to three fingers before an inquiry is launched.

Stephen Kay, HSE branch chair said: "Rather than axing HSE inspectors we would like to see the numbers doubled so each workplace is inspected at least once every five years. At present employers can expect a visit every 10 to 15 years if at all." Each year, around 27,000 workers in the UK are seriously injured, 2.3 million suffer from an

Guardian angel and

As Prospect continues its campaign, Health and Safety Executive inspector Simon Hester describes his role as an in the Field Operations Division



I COVER a patch of North London with over 2,000 general manufacturing workplaces. In an average week I divide my work between unan-

nounced lightning workplace inspections, investigative visits in response to accidents or complaints from employees or members of the public, ongoing prosecutions and investigations and the administration aspects of the job.

I try to spend roughly two days out of the office on workplace inspections. Recently my group undertook a 'blitz' of vehicle repair garages within the patch. The aim was to look at key health and safety priorities identified in the government's revitalising health and safety strategy. Launched in mid-2000 to inject new impetus into the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act, the strategy set ambitious targets to reduce workplace accidents and ill-health.

I recently visited bus garages at 6am, took a specialist inspector to an engineering factory to look at the guarding of computer controlled equipment and checked that a meat processing company had installed lifting equipment to prevent their staff having to lift heavy loads.

While the target areas for action provide the structure of the inspections, simply being on the premises allows me to spot other potentially lethal hazards. In another workplace I prohibited the use of a pressure washer because the internal wiring on the electrical cable powering the washer was exposed and there was no residual circuit device to automatically cut the power in the event of an accident. A fuse will protect damage to the equipment but an RCD is essential to protect the operator.

These unannounced inspections are part and parcel of the preventative work we undertake. Most businesses are receptive,



Simon discusses safety during a lightning visit to an engineering firm

even enthusiastic that they have a government appointed adviser to help them save lives, stop injuries and make their workplace safe, free of charge.

Workplace visits are also triggered by complaints from employees or members of the public. For example, a bus worker contacted me about a lack of rest and toilet facilities at the end of their shift and I visited a print works after a worker complained of inadequate ventilation, hot working conditions and a dictatorial management unwilling to take staff concerns seriously. Complainants are guaranteed anonymity so when I visit the workplaces in question I pretend it is a lightning inspection – diplomacy is a must in this job.

Problems often boil down to ignorance of the potential risks and I see my role as a source of guidance. In many cases what I present employers with is not an official document but more of a reminder, sometimes even a quick handwritten note, listing areas to act on in a

The HSE investigates around 20 per cent of major injuries reported to it – but we can only do what we can do. If I just visited factories every day non-stop it would take me 500 days to cover those in my patch.

timescale that I negotiate with them. We aim to avoid a bureaucratic process and when the work has been done they fax the reminder back to the office with ticks or comments.

But in more severe cases I will serve the employer with either an improvement or prohibition notice, which puts the demand for the problem to be rectified within a given timescale on a legal footing, with potentially large fines or even imprisonment for non-compliance.

While preventative work is a major factor of my job, unfortunately another key and growing aspect is investigating major injuries and fatalities, which may lead to prosecutions if the employer is deemed criminally accountable.

HSE investigates all fatalities and major injuries, such as

serious multiple fractures or amputation. Investigations will also be triggered for most reportable diseases, for example dermatitis and asthma, and any incidence of particular concern such as any involvement of children or public health concerns like legionella.

I deal with all aspects of criminal and safety law in a case, gathering and organising the evidence, right through to presenting the case in court. For example, a recent case of mine concerned a man who fell three metres in a warehouse in the middle of the night. He suffered multiple fractures of his left arm and lay unconscious for an hour or more until he was found bewildered and wandering round the site by his supervisor.

As an HSE inspector it was my job to interview the victim and members of staff from all shifts at the warehouse. I also interviewed the company under caution and presented the case in court where they pleaded guilty and were fined £5,000 plus costs. The victim is now taking a civil action for compensation.

Other cases which I am waiting to come to trial include a young man paralysed after he fell through the ceiling from a storage area and broke his back and a printer who was very badly burnt by a fireball after the cleaning solvent he was using caught fire.

I recently attended an inquest into the death of a young man crushed by an overturned vehicle, an accident I investigated. But providing the evidence and liaising with the police, crown prosecution service and the legal system can take a long time.

At present the HSE investigates around 20 per cent of major injuries reported to it – but we can only do what we can do. If I just visited factories every day non-stop it would take me 500 days to cover those in my patch alone. In practice many are never going to be visited.

It is up to employers to ensure the safety of their workers. If they are unsure of any issue I would urge them to phone the HSE Infoline who will direct them towards the relevant information.

The reality of the health and safety system in Britain is that it is based on self-regulation. But too many employers ignore the views and experience of people in the front line, the workers. A vital component of the system is having active and confident safety representatives in every workplace, leaving HSE to handle the mishaps, set the standards, give advice and enforce the law.

Glasgow Firefighter David Dundas thought his career with Strathclyde Fire Brigade was over when he developed epilepsy. David explains how, with the help of FBU official Stewart Kinnon, he kept his job

I WAS in the Royal Engineers until I was 25. When I left the army, I decided to become a Firefighter and I have been doing this job for more than 10 years. Yorkhill, where I work, is the second busiest station in Strathclyde.

On 1 July 2001, my partner Liz, who is a nurse, woke up because she heard me gasp for breath. I had turned blue and she thought I was having a heart attack. It didn't look like a seizure; then I began convulsing and foaming at the mouth. The first I remember is talking to the paramedic in the ambulance.

Accident and Emergency referred me to my GP. The first thing he did was call the DVLA and I already knew they would tell me to stop driving. Then he asked me about my job and when I told him I was a Firefighter, he said: "You've lost your job. If you don't tell your employer about this, I will" – which was lovely! That kind of attitude from a doctor didn't give me any confidence.

He arranged my appointment a fortnight later at the Glasgow Western Infirmary's Epilepsy Unit where I was told anyone can have a single seizure. I put in sick lines to my fire station while different hospital tests were done. No-one was sure I had epilepsy so I went back to work at the end of September and 10 days later, I took another seizure, again at night.

There's no history of epilepsy in my family, but in February 2000 I was involved in a crash in a fire engine and I had whiplash injuries. The MRI tests taken after I had these two seizures showed a slight distortion at the base of my brain.

Liz and I wondered if the epilepsy developed as a result of the crash. I had made a compensation claim and the neurologist I saw decided it was unlikely the accident had caused my epilepsy. He thought it was probably just coincidental. This news made me worry that our baby son Scott might run a higher risk of developing epilepsy, as I did.

After the second seizure, I went back to the Epilepsy Unit where I was diagnosed with nocturnal epilepsy and secondary, generalised



I have

seizures. I never knew there were so many kinds of epilepsy.

My doctor, Professor Brodie, thought I could be a Firefighter as long as I was taking medication that controlled the seizures.

I asked to see the Fire Brigade doctor who basically told me that if I had epilepsy he would be recommending to the Director of Personnel that I be retired. I didn't think he knew enough about it so I said I would speak to my union official and that's when Stewart Kinnon got involved.

UNION'S ROLE

"I never had a case like this before and obviously it was a very stressful time for Davie," says Stewart. "I made some phone calls and sent a few emails. The advice I got at the start from union officials and epilepsy groups was the same – once you have epilepsy you can't be a Firefighter. I didn't give Davie any false hopes and I was honest that his prospects weren't looking good.

"Then, the only thing I knew about epilepsy was you don't stick your fingers in someone's mouth during a seizure and you try make the person as comfortable as possible.

"Davie told me he might have nocturnal epilepsy, which again I



David with Liz and Scott and, right, at work with Stewart Kinnon



again like "don't go off your head!"

My family and friends have been brilliant. I know Liz got a fright when I took these seizures and she was concerned about me hurting myself. Liz was 15 weeks pregnant when the first one happened. Then we thought I was going to lose my job and we worried about money so she worked right up until a few weeks before our son Scott was born. I couldn't drive and I would walk everywhere or get the bus. People were very kind and offered us lifts if we were going out socially but I did miss not being able to drive Liz and the baby home myself from the hospital.

"News about Davie having epilepsy was kept reasonably quiet within the Fire Brigade and not publicised for Davie's own sake," says Stewart. "Epilepsy is scary and people might not like to work with somebody who has epilepsy or mistakenly think Davie will have a fit any second. Hopefully this article will change unhelpful attitudes like that."

CASE CHANGING ATTITUDES

I think my case could change how employers deal with epilepsy. The Fire Brigade doctor has definitely changed his attitude towards Firefighters with epilepsy. He meant to retire me but he changed his mind when he found out what Professor Brodie said and when he learned that other Scottish Brigades had Firefighters with epilepsy.'

"Davie's situation has already helped another Firefighter," says Stewart. "A union official in Essex asked me for details of what happened because she had a Firefighter with epilepsy who was moved into the control room but who really wanted to stay a Firefighter. Thanks to this case, she has managed to get the man back into the job."

"Maybe in the future people who have epilepsy will start applying to be a Firefighter which they never would have done before. However, we have won the argument for anyone who takes epilepsy while they are in the Brigade to stay in their post."

"The Fire Brigade were pretty good once we got over the original hurdle with the company doctor. His lack of knowledge about epilepsy was the drawback. To be honest I don't think Davie and myself really thought he would still be a fire fighter in 2003 – it's great that he is!"

This is an edited version of an article that first appeared in *Epilepsy News*. Thanks to Epilepsy Scotland for helping make this article possible.

knew nothing about. I made more enquiries and spoke with specialists like Professor Brodie. I soon realised if the drugs worked then someone with epilepsy has as much chance of having a seizure as anyone else. Davie told me it could take a while to work out what drugs work and what drugs don't, but his dosage was balanced quickly."

The union heard about two cases similar to mine in Lothian and the Highlands which suggested I could remain in the Fire Brigade if I took medication for epilepsy. Stewart and I asked for another meeting with the Fire Brigade doctor.

Stewart's argument was that, according to the DVLA, I would have my driving licence back if I did not have another seizure for 12 months. Since this outside, official body was prepared to allow me to drive again, so should my employer.

The Fire Brigade doctor agreed to keep me in the service. I was transferred in February to a day shift job where I worked in the community safety department at my own fire station. I did that until October 2002 when I got my driving licence back.'

Stewart says he pointed out to the Fire Brigade doctor that other Firefighters were not threatened with losing their jobs because they were taking medication to deal with chronic conditions like diabetes, angina and depression. They were not automatically being retired on medical grounds and epilepsy should be treated in the same way.

"Obviously, staff have a responsibility to take their medication and if they don't they are not suitable to be a Firefighter," says Stewart. "I could have tried to argue that as soon the drugs were working, Davie could be returned to the fire crews but we decided to use the criteria that as soon as he got his driving licence back he could come back as a full-time Firefighter."

How did my colleagues react? I told certain people but not everybody. It's a small station and I knew people would find out but it didn't bother me. If anyone asks me about it, I tell them. No-one really treats me differently but I do get a couple of jokes now and

Talk to union,

THE conciliation and arbitration service ACAS recently issued a new workplace bullying and harassment guide. It says that "Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and should not be tolerated in the workplace."

Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

The guide says that: "Harassment can also have a specific meaning under certain laws (for instance if harassment is related to sex, race disability, it may be unlawful discrimination.) By December 2003, there will also be protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and sexual orientation."

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual (perhaps by someone in a position of authority such as a manager or supervisor) or involve groups of people. It may be obvious or insidious. Whatever form it takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.

Examples of bullying/harassing behaviour include:

- Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion and religion or belief)
- Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to see them
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position



- Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, the display of offensive materials
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism; and
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities

The guide points out that bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face. They may also occur in written communications, email, phone, and automatic supervision methods such as computer recording of downtime from work or the number of calls handled if these are not applied to all workers.

The guide says that: "If you are sure you are being bullied or harassed, then there are a number of options to consider. You should take any action you decide upon as quickly as possible.

"Try talking to colleagues to find out if anyone else is suffering, or if anyone has witnessed what has happened to you – avoid being alone with the bully.

"Let your union representative know of the problem, or seek advice elsewhere, perhaps from a Citizens Advice Bureau, an ACAS enquiry point or one of the bullying helplines that are now available by phone or the Internet.

Labour Research Department



F B U C O N F I D E N T I A L F R E E P H O N E
H E L P L I N E



Billy Bragg entertains the crowds

PICTURES: John Harris/reportdigital.co.uk

Remembering



Tam McFarlane
Regional Secretary
Region 14

IMAGINE this: You work as an agricultural labourer and your boss keeps cutting your wage without even telling you, let alone taking anything else into account. You talk to your mates in the job and decide to have a meeting to see what can be done. Six of you meet outside, under a tree, in a churchyard and come up with the idea that you would join together and form a “trade society” to try and get the boss to take your problems seriously. The six of you sign a piece of paper saying just that and then you get arrested for taking a “illegal oath” get sentenced to seven years

and are shipped off to Australia to do hard labour.

As incredible as it may seem this was exactly what happened to six men in 1834 in the small village of Tolpuddle in Dorset, which as a result became the unlikely birthplace of the Trade Union movement. The six men, George Loveless, James Loveless, John Standfield, Thomas Standfield, James Brine and James Hammett, were forever known as the “Tolpuddle Martyrs” and their actions in refusing to accept injustice by a landowner set off a chain of events which led to their early release and the start of the Trade Union movement.

In order to commemorate the Tolpuddle Martyrs the South West TUC organises a yearly festival and this year’s was undoubtedly the best so far with record crowds camping on Friday and Saturday night and an impressive list of outstanding speakers and bands. The festival is a heady three days of music, drama and politics uniting people across the country in a celebration of the Trade Union movement and the memory of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. The FBU had a heavy involvement this year with Regions 13 and 14 joining forces to ensure an effective presence. The FBU stall was a very busy place, which gave us an opportunity to talk to fellow trade unionists and answer their questions about the

recent strikes and the pay campaign in general. Many thanks must go to Dave Beverley's daughters Charlie and Amy for their ability to get other people to give donations in return for FBU Pay Campaign t-shirts.

The festival began with a gentle sing-song on Friday evening and then, as more and more people arrived, took off on Saturday afternoon with a series of workshops. Tony Benn and Roy Bailey entertained a sell-out crowd with their song and spoken word performance on Saturday evening, saying: "We wouldn't have come to Tolpuddle if it wasn't so important."

Benn exhorted people to continue the struggle for equality, saying: "We are driven by the flame of injustice and the flame of hope."

The evening was rounded off with a fantastic performance by the Reggae Revolution and as the TUC website puts it: "some dazzling dancing by our colleagues from the FBU." This was in the form of the new FBU double act of Steve Underhill and his straight man John Drake.

NICK HARPER LEAPS OFF STAGE

Sunday's fun kicked off with Nick Harper's entertaining set, during which he leapt off the stage and ran around the crowd – much to their surprise and amusement – and then a beautiful performance by Susan Hedges. TUC president Nigel de Gruchy was the first speaker to take to the stage and he hinted at the trade union movement's current difficulties with the Government, saying: "We haven't always been flavour of the day

because our aim is to represent our members' hopes and aspirations and we will continue to do so."

Ana Lopez, who is leading sex workers' fight for recognition, was asked to speak on the day and responded with a marvellous speech which was both moving and hard hitting, challenging people's perceptions and prejudices towards workers in the sex industry. She told the audience that, regardless of their views of sex workers, they should rally behind them because: "We are working people, the same as you – except that we are likely to be beaten up, abused and raped during the course of our work." This courageous speech was, for me, one of the highlights of the weekend made, as it was, by a real person engaged in a very real fight under difficult and dangerous circumstances.

ANDY MOCKS GOVERNMENT ON WAR

Our own FBU general secretary Andy Gilchrist then strode onto the stage and threatened to sing. Thankfully, he changed his mind and instead induced laughter by mocking the government's pro-war stance, saying: "As of today they haven't found any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. I would have thought they would be fairly easy to spot – they are fairly long, they have high explosives written on the side and they have fuses at one end." Andy gave a very forceful political speech talking about the Government's disgraceful reaction to the fight for fair pay in the Fire Service and their wider attacks on the working class which was well received by the crowd.

As the speakers went on to lay wreaths on the grave of martyr James Hammett the colourful parade of banners began to wind



Gertrude Hambira, General Secretary of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe, lays a wreath on the grave of James Hammett



its way through the village, past the aged sycamore tree where the Martyrs held their fateful union meetings. This is a tradition of Tolpuddle with Trade Union banners from across the UK being paraded as a symbol of Trade Union unity and the streets of the village were lined with people coming to enjoy this dazzling spectacle. The FBU South West banner was given an outing alongside the Gloucestershire banner, ably carried by Andy Gilchrist and Keith Hanscombe, an honour I am sure they are grateful for! The FBU delegation included former General Secretary Ken Cameron and his partner Nula marching in good spirits and good health although the lure of the Martyrs Tavern proved too much on the return leg!

BARBER SLAMS PAY GAP

By the time the marchers had hung their banners on the special scaffolding overlooking the site, TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber was ready to speak. He warned the Government that a new generation of trade union leaders was prepared to take the lead in tackling a "disgraceful" pay gap of 20 per cent between men and women and to drive out racism, a strong message which must be lived up to.

Gertrude Hambira, General Secretary of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe was next, telling of her struggles to represent her impoverished members. She ended by appealing for international solidarity, leading the crowd in a chorus of "we shall not be moved".

The final speaker was Tony Benn, who enthralled the crowd with his take on British politics, reminding them how trade unions were responsible for improving conditions throughout the world. "The difference between globalisation and internationalism," he said, "is that internationalism involves working together with people to improve their living and working conditions."

His message was one of hope, not pessimism, pointing out that the vital role of Trade Unions in the political process must be continued as effectively in the future as it was in the past in order to achieve a just and fair society for all. He walked off stage to a standing ovation.

The crowd was in for a surprise when Michael Eavis, (organiser of the Glastonbury Festival), strolled on stage to introduce the final act, Billy Bragg, whose flight from Canada had landed at Heathrow only three hours earlier. He had jetted in to Dorset after a 13-hour journey from Vancouver and told the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival: "This festival just keeps getting better and better."

The Dorset-based singer finished his set with a newly-penned version of the Internationale, before departing for some well-earned sleep, vowing: "See you next year!"

It was left to Jon Gray, Chair of the South West TUC, to have the final words, saying: "This was the best festival ever." There were not many people who would disagree with him.

I would like to thank Dean Mills, Jon Drake, Steve Underhill, Bill Hendy, Dave Beverley (and family), Rosie Tully, Kerry Baigent, Andy Gilchrist and Keith Hanscombe



Andy threatens to "sing" at Tolpuddle

Education

- 10–12 October, 2003. Black & Ethnic Minority Members' Section, Wortley Hall.
Contact: Paul Ahmed 07718 159224
- 17–19 October, 2003. Gay & Lesbian Section, Wortley Hall.
Contact: Richard Moore at Gandfbu@tinyworld.co.uk or Stewart Brown at gal01@fbu.org.uk 0141 221 2309
- 1–7 November, 2003. National FBU School, Wortley Hall –
Contact your Regional Office.
- 12–14 March, 2004. National Women's' Section, Wortley Hall.
Contact: Dona Feltham 07802 583 622 or Kerry Baigent 07736 818036



Wortley Hall

Celebrating 100 years of workers'

A NEW book – *A Ministry of Enthusiasm – Centenary essays on the Workers' Educational Association* – has been published to mark the centenary of the formation of the Workers' Educational Association.

The organisation was founded in 1903 at a time when the school leaving age was 14.

Its aim was to provide working people – mostly manual workers – with opportunities for further education, mainly through universities.

The message was spread through various parts of the country

and, by 1914, it had 179 branches and 11,500 individual members.

The book traces the organisation right up to the present day. It describes the support received from the trade union movement and from local councillors, the subjects chosen to be taught and how the movement has been funded, among other things.

There are special chapters on the WEA's evolution in the West Midlands, in Scotland and in Wales. Guess who wrote the enthusiastic forward: Tony Blair!

■ Available from: Centenary Publications, WEA National Office, Temple House, 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PB

COMPENSATION MAKES UP FOR FINANCIAL LOSS

Dear Firefighter,

My dream career was cruelly cut short when I was seriously injured in a road accident.

A Firefighter at West Norwood fire Station in South London, I required years of surgery on my left foot after being thrown from my motorbike when a motorist strayed into my path in October 1998. I had to rely on my wife to care for me much of the time.

After returning to the Fire Service on light duties in June 1999, I was forced to take medical retirement in September 2000. I joined the prison service in November 2000 in a support grade job. But because of my restricted mobility I will never pass a fitness test to become a prison officer.

Thankfully, I received £140,000 compensation through the FBU's free legal service. The compensation I have received for my injuries, loss of earnings and future loss of pension will never make up for what I have lost in life.

This compensation will, however, go some way to making up for my financial losses for those previously simple things, like cleaning the windows, that I will now have to pay someone to do.

I am very grateful to the FBU and to their lawyers Thompsons for fighting for this compensation for me.

Simon Lawrence

THANK YOU, FBU, FOR SAVING MY PENSION

Dear Firefighter,

I would like to thank the FBU and and its officials for assisting me with my personal injury claim through Thompsons, and also my appeal against Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service against retirement without pension.

I joined the Service and also the Union in 1976 and was retired without pension in 2002 in the rank of Retained Sub Officer after receiving three back injuries in 1977, 1996 and 2000 (injuries on duty). The FBU assisted me in proving that these injuries significantly resulted in my premature retirement; also through appeal to the medical board, my claim was upheld and I am entitled to a pension.

Many thanks to Brothers Mat Lee, Jon Holding and Ben Heanue of Derbyshire, also Dave Limer of Region 6.

If I can be of any assistance to anyone who may be experiencing something similar to what I have been through, please contact one of the above who have my number.

Keep up the good work and again, many thanks.

Derek Dyson
Retained Sub Officer (Retired)

EXPERT SUBMISSIONS WERE CRUCIAL FOR ME

Dear Firefighter,

I am writing to express my sincere thanks to the Union, its representatives, legal officers and solicitors for the support I received in pursuing a case against my employing authority for an injury to the knee in 1996.

In particular, I would like to mention the expert submissions of two Union-appointed Health & Safety Officers of whom one was Frank Morris, which I thought was absolutely crucial. I wish to thank them both.

Subsequently, the claim was settled out of Court at the High Court in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in December 2002.

In my opinion, it proves how our Union is as good, if not better, than any other.

Martin T Roddy

REINSTATED, THANKS TO SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Dear Firefighter,

I was suspended from my duties as a wholetime Firefighter for four months while awaiting the outcome of a Court hearing. This has now been resolved and I have been reinstated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the FBU and Thompsons Solicitors for all their support and assistance during what has been a very difficult time for both my family and I. It was the continued support and legal advice sought on my behalf from my Union representatives within the FBU and Thompsons Solicitors that resulted in my case being decided and me being reinstated in a job that I have such a great passion for.

Please accept this letter of thanks and gratitude not only from

myself, but also from my family who have stood by me during what has been an extremely troublesome time.

P.R. Simons

FROM BRANCH OFFICIAL TO MASTER IN LAW

Dear Firefighter,

Many months ago, as a Branch Official, I began to realise the importance of an understanding of the law in relation to trade union activities.

I subsequently embarked upon and gained a law degree with the University of London, which I followed up with a postgraduate diploma in law.

I then wished to undertake a Masters in Law, but I discovered that the costs were prohibitive. My Brigade Officials, Paul Clarke and Lincoln Ball guided me towards applying for a FBU grant, which I later acquired. This covered the costs of my course, including books and materials.

I have now gained a Masters in Law and would like to thank my Brigade Officials for their assistance, plus the FBU for providing the education grant.

Mick Rowley

**LCGI, LL.B (Hons), Pg Dip Law, LL.M
(Former Branch Secretary at Windsor Fire Station)**

HIGH RISE INFO MUST BE AVAILABLE TO BRIGADES

Dear Firefighter,

In the 1970s when I was London Regional Chair with a Health & Safety responsibility, I raised with the Brigade the potential hazard to Firefighters of the use of high alumina cement in the construction of high rise buildings. I was particularly concerned about the effect of impact from outside the building or explosive force from inside, accident cause or otherwise.

High alumina cement has the potential for corroding high-tension steel rods used in the construction of many modern buildings; these steel rods are essential to the strength and stability of the buildings.

I suggested at the time that the Brigade obtain the necessary information that would be stored on computer in the Brigade Operations Room so that in the event of a serious fire or explosion in a high rise building the potential risk to Firefighters could be weighed against the potential value of the task they



High and rising – the Nat West Tower and the new Swiss Re building reflected in a neighbouring tower

would be required to carry out and the necessary precautions taken.

Since 9/11 it is even more essential for information on designed and construction of high rise buildings to be provided to Fire Brigades with buildings such as the Nat West Tower and Canary Wharf Building in London, which at the time of their construction were the tallest in the UK.

Such buildings are now becoming commonplace; others no doubt are in the pipeline. Their structural failure potential in the event of an impact or explosion situation would be essential information for the Officer in Charge of attendance for the protection of his team.

In 1945 the then tallest building in the world was struck in thick fog by a U.S. Airforce bomber at about the 80th floor level. There was severe damage to several floors of the building, and casualties, but the building did not collapse due to the type of construction.

The Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre on the other hand, which was planned and constructed differently, came down like a house of cards. As I understand these buildings were designed to withstand a high wind load. But resistance to an impact of the kind that struck the Empire State Building 57 years earlier were not including in the design. New York Firefighters had no idea that such a risk existed and paid the price.

Had the New York Fire Department been made aware of the construction risk the job would have been tackled differently and only those immediately necessary to attempt life saving would have been put at risk. Vehicles and crews not immediately needed would have been parked well away from immediate risk.

It is time to collate the necessary information so that British Senior Officers at high risk building incidents will have the facts which will enable them to avoid the mistakes made by our colleagues in New York.

I hope that this letter may save lives of Firefighters in the future not only the UK but elsewhere in the world.

Bro Trevor Jones OOT

THANKS FOR HELP WITH BENEVOLENT FUND

Dear Firefighter,

I am writing to express my appreciation for the work you carried out in getting me a grant from the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.

I served 17 years in the Fire Service of which ten were with the original County of Flint, as a Sub Officer. I left in 1969 along with many other highly trained and experienced Firefighters, the reason being the pitifully low wage structure at that time.

My wife Annie suffered four strokes in 1995, and I finished

work to care for her as she was left 50% paralysed. I spent my life savings buying equipment to try and give her a decent lifestyle and the funeral finally took the remainder of our savings. She passed away on 16 January 2001.

I can recall during the 50s and 60s her trying to scrimp and save and bring up our three kids on the low wage. Therefore I know she would be delighted in the knowledge that all my comrades have helped me in being able to provide a decent memorial stone for her (and my!) grave, which has now been erected.

John Wright

REMEMBERING THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM

Dear Firefighter,

I have been asked by the Sunderland Branch of the Royal British Legion, the Parachute Regimental Association and a great many individual veterans on the Sunderland Remembrance Parade 2002 to thank the National Office of the FBU, and Regions, 3,4,5,6,8,11 and 14, for their generosity in taking advertisements in our parade publicity book.

I would particularly like to thank Alan McLean of the north east regional office for his support in this matter. The support from the FBU, Tyne & Wear Brigade and the many other contributing arms of the Fire Service has been much appreciated by all involved in this great parade. I hope that we as a Service and as a Trade Union can continue to support the generation that freed Europe from the shackles of Fascism 60 years ago.

A warm fraternal invitation is extended to all FBU members to join us in Sunderland on Sunday 9 November 2003 to pay our respects as part of the Fire Service Contingent, and to sink a few pints of course! For further information ring 0191 737 2035.

Bro. Arther Lockyear
Parade Co-ordinator

YOUR HELP WILL BOOST BURNS RESEARCH

Dear Firefighter,

I was delighted to receive the donation of £10,000 in favour of RAFT from the FBU.

Your donation will help fund our burns research:

- a) looking at improving the blood supply to transplanted tissue and skin grafts, and

Victory at last for South Africa asbestos

IN MARCH 2003, two landmark announcements changed the course of asbestos struggles in South Africa. In parallel deals, British company Cape plc, which mined asbestos for over 90 years in the Northern Cape and Limpopo provinces, and South African company Gencor, which took over many of Cape's operations in 1979, agreed to compensate thousands of South African workers suffering from asbestos-related diseases.

The Cape settlement marks an end to six long years of legal wrangling and a campaign victory not only for the 7,500 claimants but one for all those involved in the campaign in the UK, including trade unions, campaign groups and asbestos support groups. Since 1997, when the first legal case was filed in the UK,



the campaign against Cape has been through several phases of hearings and appeals. Supporters of Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA), the organisation which led the campaign in Britain to hold Cape accountable for exposing its workers to 30 times the British legal limit of asbestos, painstakingly campaigned to build public, media and parliamentary awareness around the case.

The FBU played a vital part in sealing this victory. While many individual FBU members wrote to Cape urging them to deliver justice for their former workers, FBU officials met with some of the claimants in the case and the leaders of the South African Union of Mineworkers to offer their assistance and solidarity. The FBU also put its name to adverts in the national press publicly shaming Cape and demanding that they pay up.

The final Cape deal has been criticised for failing to set aside money for any future claimants and lacking any provision for rehabilitating the asbestos dumps that still surround many of the former mines. The affected communities are also furious that hundreds of people were allowed to die while Cape used every tactic possible to avoid justice. While these factors have limited



Claimants in the Cape case

their celebrations, after a long, drawn-out fight the claimants have largely welcomed the deal. For Hendrik Afrika, a claimant who suffers from first-degree asbestosis, the years of waiting have made him angry and disillusioned, but he is relieved that the money is finally on its way. "If the money comes, my life will be more comfortable. Every week I go to the clinic and the doctor says '50 Rand for 10 pills' and I cannot pay. Our children will also be able to go to school and we will get food every day. We have missed out these past few years."

The Gencor settlement is also of particular significance. The South African mining company has agreed to pay 448 million Rand (£35 million) to its former employees in the biggest payout by far of its kind in South Africa. It is also the first time black miners have got compensation from their employers. Responding to news of the deals, Archie Palane, National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa, said, "there are too many multinational companies neglecting the health and safety of their workers in their raw pursuit of profits. This case should offer a valuable lesson to those companies who continue this form of inhumane exploitation today."

ACTSA's campaign successes are derived from our individual supporters and trade union affiliates. To join our campaigns, see www.actsa.org or contact ACTSA on 020 7833 3133.

Laura Fisher

Campaigns Officer at Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA)



Boycott Coca Cola, say

AN INTERNATIONAL boycott of Coca Cola products has been launched to stop the policy of violence that has left eight Colombian Coca Cola workers assassinated in recent years. The boycott has been called by Colombian food and drinks workers union SINALTRAINAL and has the endorsement of the country's main trade union federation the CUT as well as the anti-globalisation network, World Social Forum.

SINALTRAINAL accuses Coca Cola of working in consort with paramilitary death squads to remove union activists and hence the union organisation from its plants. Accusations centre on the murder of Carepa plant in Antioquia where 5 union members were assassinated between 1994 and 1996.

The union and the families of assassinated Coca Cola workers have also brought a civil court case under the US Alien Torts Act which is being considered by courts in Miami. On 31st March 2003 US District Court Judge Jose E. Martinez ruled that the case for compensation for human rights violations committed by paramilitaries on behalf of Coca-Cola bottlers Panamerican Beverages, Inc. ("Panamco") and Bebidas y Alimentos ("Bebidas") in Colombia can go forward.

Lawyers point out it is significant that the US court has held that the allegations were sufficient to allow the case to proceed on a theory that the paramilitaries were acting in a symbiotic relationship with the Colombian government.

SINALTRAINAL and its supporters have called for a year-long boycott of all Coca Cola products until a number of demands have been met, including that there are no more assassinations, that Coca Cola prints a memoriam of the murdered workers on its product labels and pays full reparations to the victims' families. The union also demands that Coca Cola supports an annual forum on human rights for workers in multinational companies.

SINALTRAINAL and its supporters have held three international public hearings in the last year. The first one was outside Coca Cola's corporate headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia on 20th July 2002, followed by a hearing in the European Parliament in Brussels on 10th October and concluding with a forum in Bogota, Colombia on 5th December 2002. The campaign will be simultaneously launched in Bogota, several European capitals and the United States.

For more information contact David Rhys-Jones: 07932 034477. Colombia Solidarity Campaign, PO Box 8446, London N17 6NZ. E-mail: colombia_sc@hotmail.com. Web site www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk



Justice for Colombia and War on Want have staged a mock assassination of Britain's trade union leaders and MPs – including former Foreign Office Minister Tony Lloyd – in a bid to highlight the terror campaign being waged against the Colombian trade union movement. Leaders from 13 trade unions and MPs, some handcuffed and gagged, assembled outside Parliament, in a show of solidarity with a trade union movement which saw 184 of its members killed last year alone. They called for a freeze of UK military and security assistance to Colombia. The UK is believed to be the second largest donor of Colombian military assistance in the world. It is estimated that 95% of trade union assassinations are committed by paramilitary death squads with well documented links to the Colombian armed forces that the UK government assists.

Why not send an email demanding an end to military aid to Colombia to the Foreign Office to james.morrison@fco.gov.uk. A model letter is available on: www.waronwant.org

Israeli policies increase Palestinian

POVERTY in Palestine seldom makes the headlines but it is blighting the future of a nation held under virtual house arrest. A new report *Fighting Palestinian Poverty* documents rising poverty levels in the Occupied Territories and argues that a creeping humanitarian disaster is overwhelming the Palestinian people.

The report argues that decades of curfews, checkpoints, road closures and settlement expansion have robbed the Palestinians of self-sufficiency and fostered a culture of dependence and powerlessness.

It is estimated that there are over 120 Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which when added to roadblocks, divide the West Bank into 300 enclaves and the Gaza Strip into three separate sections.

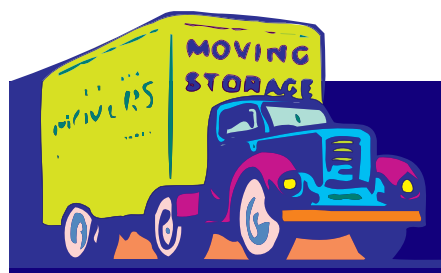
The denial of freedom of movement for Palestinians has made any semblance of normal life impossible. Collective punishment of this kind means people are unable to get to work, school or even hospital while the arbitrary and random nature of curfews is designed to make it impossible for people and civil institutions to make any plans.

For more information see: www.waronwant.org



An article by FBU London Region Treasurer Linda Smith (above) won the top prize for feature articles in this

year's TUC press and public relations awards. Her story of a visit to Palestinian Firefighters was, said the judges, "A moving, interesting and informative first person account."



ON THE MOVE?

Members are reminded to advise their Brigade Membership Secretary of any change of address. Head Office should be advised of any changes of next of kin or nominations for benefits.

Time for justice for

THE fifth World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial meeting took place in Cancun, Mexico in early September, but as expected, the meeting did not herald a new era of growth and poverty alleviation among middle income and least developed countries.

Reasons to be optimistic are thin on the ground given that the GDP of the 50 poorest countries has fallen by 0.4% per year in the last decade, according to the United Nations Human Development Report 2003. This could yet worsen warns the World Bank if the Aids pandemic is left unchecked. In Africa alone, 28 million people are infected with HIV, with only 4 per cent of this figure given access to life-saving retro-viral drugs.

Recently, everybody from George Bush, Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac, to the WTO, International Monetary Fund and World Bank, is talking about tackling the "roots of poverty". Promises have been made to battle Aids and sort out the rules of the global trading system. In 2000, the great and the good signed up to the UN-sponsored Millennium Development Project aimed at redressing the balance of global inequality. Each UN member nation, has committed itself to eight development goals spanning economy, education and Aids – all to be completed by 2015.

However, there has been a complete lack of political will. Take Aids. In 2002, the European Union, Japan and the United States



JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

LONDON: World Development Movement political theatre outside the Department of Trade and Industry. 'Cancun Corporate Circus' was performed in a protest against trade agreements, which will adversely affect the poor at the WTO meeting in Mexico.

set up the Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. It was agreed that each bloc should give \$1 billion to cover the costs of the fund's programmes in 2004. But at a donors meeting in July, the US reneged on its commitment despite the fact that \$1 billion is just 0.1 per cent of its GDP. The US could only find \$200 million this year for the Global Fund. Likewise, the EU and Japan also went back on their pledges, leaving the fund with only one-third of its original target.

Compare this to public funds made available for invading other countries. So far the US has spent \$48 billion on invading oil rich Iraq. The war in Iraq has reportedly cost the UK taxpayer £5 billion. Such budget "choices" show that, with regards to aid at least, rich countries remain committed only to schemes that further their economic agenda.



LOUIS GALDAMEZ/REUTERS

SAN SALVADOR: Women protest in the principal streets of the capital San Salvador on September 10 as the WTO conference opened in Cancun, Mexico. Popular organisations and farmers criticised the WTO, saying it was imposing the rules of the world-wide commerce to benefit the great companies and the harm of poor countries.

The agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is a case in point. The United States could have already placed affordable Aids drugs in the hands of millions of sufferers if it had supported an agreement at the WTO in December 2002 aimed at relaxing drugs patent laws preventing least developed countries from importing generic drugs from a number of countries such as India and Thailand after 2005. Since the last WTO meeting, the US has repeatedly blocked any attempts to reach an agreement on TRIPS. With \$460 million received from the Big Pharma lobby in the last US presidential election, it is unlikely the Bush administration will seek to resolve the TRIPS issue at Cancun.

RHETORIC AND REALITY

The gap between rhetoric and reality is similarly glaring on the issue of trade reforms.

Since the WTO Doha summit in October 2001, world leaders have (publicly at least) finally made the link between world poverty and unfair world trade rules. DTI chief Patricia Hewitt said in June. "The time has passed when richer countries could use trade negotiations to increase their profits at the expense of the developing world".

One area singled out for criticism is the massive agricultural subsidies paid to farmers in rich countries that allow them to sell surplus produce at a fraction of production cost into markets of poor countries. At present, annual subsidies paid to EU farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are larger than the entire sub-Saharan GDP. Total US agricultural subsidies are also larger than many economies. Combined, these subsidies have been instrumental in all but destroying local production in places like Mexico and Haiti. And just like TRIPS, both the US and EU have made sure that reform of subsidies was left very cloudy at the last WTO meeting.

Since then, however, the EU has been promising to reform the CAP. Hailed as the centre-piece of the EU's renewed commitment to fairer trade, CAP reform will be used as a bargaining chip at Cancun to persuade the US to also lower its subsidies.

Now that the long-awaited reform has arrived, UK trade minister Mike O'Brien recently proclaimed that: "We can now go to Cancun with clean hands". So will the new CAP put an end to third world dumping? Not a chance. Although the format has been tinkered with, the EU will continue to pump \$30 billion into the CAP for the next 10 years.

Leaders of rich countries know what must be done. They must show genuine commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by doubling world aid and directing towards health, education and sustainable development. Subsidies in G8 countries should be radically reformed and markets regulated. But in a world where EU cows are worth more than human beings, and the US military budget is thirty times greater than its aid budget, reality and sentiment remain very far apart.

**This is an edited version of an article produced by
War on Want**

Union rights under

GARMENT workers in Sri Lanka have faced extreme intimidation and death threats while attempting to set up the first trade union in a free trade zone, according to War on Want project partner, the Transnational Information Exchange Asia (Tie-Asia).

Members of the Free Trade Zone Workers Union (FTZWU) at the Jaqalanka garment factory organised a ballot for collective bargaining through a trade union. The factory in the Katunayake Free Trade Zone, close to Colombo airport, produces garments for major brands such as Nike.

Tie Asia, which supports the FTZWU through leadership training and advocacy, says that workers faced threats, intimidation and harassment from management in the lead up to the ballot. Under Sri Lankan labour law, 40% of workers must vote for recognition of a union.

Tie Asia argues that due to management's intimidation tactics only 17 workers voted in the ballot. In short, workers were too scared to exercise their rights and the union has not been recognised.

War on Want is joining Tie Asia to protest against what amounts to a violation of workers' rights.

This is an extremely important case that needs international support, not only because the workers at Jaqalanka are being denied their basic rights, but because the FTZWU is using this case to show the European Union that the right to freedom of association does not exist in the free trade zones of Sri Lanka.

The results of this case will have implications for the whole of the garment sector in Sri Lanka. As trade talks continue between Sri Lanka and the EU over the new "Generalised System of Preferences" (GSP), the FTZWU is working hard to highlight current violations and ensure that when the GSP is approved there will be provisions for the improvement of the basic right to freedom of association.

Workers rights will only be improved when they have the right to core labour standards such as the freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively.

To add your voice to the protest, go to www.waronwant.org and you will find sample letters to email to Jaqalanka's management, Nike and the Sri Lanka board of investment. For more information about the ballot visit Tie Asia's website: www.tieasia.org/Jaqalanka.htm

25 YEAR BADGES



Presentation by M Roddy and E Doherty to Aubrey Crawford, Northland Fire Station, on the occasion of his retirement after 30 years of service to the union and community



Andy Foody, Aston branch, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Godward



Ashley Goodson, Erdington branch, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Godward



Alan Graham, D01, Ayr, Strathclyde being presented with his 25 Year badge from Fergus Richmond, Branch Sec. Ayr



Ben Davis, Kent South, receives his 25 year badge from Bob Fitz-Gerald



Bob George, Ward End branch, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Godward



Barry Jones, Croxteth Fire Station, Merseyside, receives his 25 year badge from Les Skarrats



Firefighter Brian Adams of Sunbury Fire Station, Surrey, receiving his 25 year medal from Sub O Tom Sheridan



Colin Colyer, Islington Branch, receives his 25 year badge from Paul Embery



Chris Wray receives his 25 year badge from Ballymena branch secretary David McComb



David Clark receives his 25 year badge from Islington Branch Secretary Paul Embery



Brother Dave Hanley receives his 25 year badge from brother Dave Williams Cheshire FBU brigade secretary



Eric Smith, Stormont, receives his 25 year badge from Gardiner Kane MLA



Glyn Johnson, Avon Brigade, receives his 25 year badge from Kevin Herniman



Graham Russel, Perry Barr branch, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Godward



Ian Forrester, Central branch, receives his 25 year badge from Steve Godward



Ian Saunders receives his 25 year badge from Brigade officers secretary Pan Poullais

25 YEAR BADGES



Ian Senescall receives his 25 year badge from watch rep **Jon Woolley** with members of Green watch **Huntingdon Cambridgeshire**.



John Fitzherbert, **Croxteth Fire Station, Merseyside**, receives his 25 year badge from **Tug Wilson**



Avon Brigade chair Kevin Herniman receives his 25 year badge from **Berni Beachgood**



Kevin Hughes, **Cheshire**, receives his 25 year badge from **Steve Tottie**



Keith Watts receives his 25 year badge from **Avon Brigade chair Kevin Herniman**



Chris Hancock presents 25 year badges to **Mike Dodd**, **Paul Briant** and **Paul Thomas** of red watch, **Bath station, County of Avon**



Nick Nicholls, **Ward End branch**, receives his 25 year badge from **Steve Godward**



Pete Bolas, **Ward End branch**, receives his 25 year badge from **Steve Godward**



Paul Brider, **Holmes Chapel Fire Station, Cheshire**, receives his 25 year badge from **Dave Williams**



Pete Matthias, **South Yorkshire**, receives his 25 year badge from **Gerry Wilson**



Ray Mitchener of **East Barnet** receives his 25 year badge from **Greg Edwards**



Richard (Ernie) Wise receives his 25 year badge from officers delegate **Will Rafter**



Steve Bostock, **Sutton Coldfield branch**, receives his 25 year badge from **Steve Godward**



Steve Evans, **Sutton Coldfield branch**, receives his 25 year badge from **Steve Godward**



Stuart Knott, **Erdington branch**, receives his 25 year badge from **Steve Godward**